



DERM Koala Habitat Mapping Another Ironic Legacy of 'The Smart State'

According to the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF), the Department of Environment and Resource Management's (DERM) koala habitat mapping for South East Queensland, undertaken in 2009, has an error so serious that it renders the whole document useless.

The error was flagged by the AKF in its submission to the *Senate Inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of the koala* due to start hearing evidence in Brisbane on Tuesday 3rd May.

The AKF's submission pointed out that DERM's mapping, which had been completed by a private consultant, completely ignores the presence of the koala's primary food tree, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, even though this is the first one listed on DERM's website.

Deborah Tabart OAM, CEO of the AKF who will appear before the Inquiry on Tuesday, says the oversight "beggars belief" and compares it to preparing a roast dinner "and leaving out the lamb".

"It puts the community in a terrible situation, and I understand completely the frustration of key stakeholders who have to work with this inferior product," Ms Tabart said.

"Time after time, we [the AKF] re-map an area with our scientifically sound, unprecedented data base and find that our maps are more accurate.

"If I was the Minister, I would be embarrassed at such a serious flaw in DERM's methodology," Ms Tabart said.

The AKF has repeatedly asked the Queensland Government to explain why they declined an offer to receive the AKF's comprehensive mapping for free prior to commissioning their own, without a tender process, at a cost of \$900,000.

"It is a complete waste of money, and worse still hinders a national mapping standard as a solution for mapping across the whole country and I will be raising this issue when I appear before the senate on Tuesday," Ms Tabart said.

The AKF's \$8 million Koala Habitat Atlas (KHA), which has recently evolved into KoalaMap an online mapping portal available free to the public, is the result of 335,000 km² that has been mapped in NSW, QLD and VIC using data from 80,000 trees at 2000 field locations in 20 study areas.

The KHA relies on accurate vegetation mapping which clearly identifies the percentages of Primary and Secondary food trees within each distinctive forest or woodland community. This information is not included in any mapping carried out by State or Federal government agencies.

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- **Interview opportunities: Deborah Tabart OAM, ph 0407 750 668**